



Dear Parents

RE: COVID-19 UPDATE 18-03-2020

Please note the following information regarding mitigation of risk for COVID-19 at Mater Dei Primary School.

CURRENT INFORMATION FROM RECENT FEDERAL MEETINGS:

- **Schools:** Schools will remain open and respond to local issues as required on the advice of health authorities (i.e. spot closures only).
- **International travel:** Arrivals will be required to self-quarantine on return to Australia for a period of 14 days.
- **'Social distancing':** Encouraging staff, students and parents to keep 1.5m away from others where possible
- **Large gatherings:** Gatherings of 500+ people are not to proceed.
- **Other non-essential gatherings:** Schools investigate and respond to other non-essential gatherings in light of mitigating the spread of the virus

SCHOOL RESPONSE:

The following measures are implemented at Mater Dei:

General:

- All major whole school events have been cancelled until further notice:
 - This includes Mater Dei Fun Run / 800m excursions, Mater Dei Cross Country (including Cross Country training), Parent Teacher Interviews, Toowoomba Eisteddfod, Yr 4 Toowoomba Catholic Schools Gala Day, camps, liturgies, and assemblies.
- The school has a COVID-19 Management plan that includes Risk Mitigation Actions and Scenario Based Action Plans.
- The chances of school closure or spot closure is possible, but not certain. We are guided by Federal Government Health Authorities, QCEC (Qld Catholic Education Commission) and TCSO (Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office) directives to this decision.
- To enable our school to be prepared for spot or full closure, a diocesan pupil-free day has been scheduled for **Friday 27th March 2020** to allow staff to prepare necessary work and undergo training for school closures. I apologise for any inconvenience this may cause. I have no doubt that this day will benefit all students in the long-term.

School Attendance:

- If your child is away, please state the reason so we can appropriately notate the reason eg, Absent – Sick.
- If you are keeping your child at home as a precautionary measure to Coronavirus and are requesting work, please note teachers will supply work in either digital or hard copy form. Parents are to monitor the pacing of the work, ie allocating work on a daily basis. Please note the teacher will provide this within a day's notice – not immediately.

Social Distancing and Gatherings:

- Minimising handshakes, high fives, and physical contact
- All interschool, district, zone, regional and state School Sport activities have been cancelled until further notice.

Additional Hygiene Practices:

- Reinforcing procedures to students for coughing, sneezing and nose blowing
- Reinforcing to students – no sharing food and water bottles
- Reinforcing safe food handling and preparation in the tuckshop
- Use of hand sanitiser upon entering and exiting the classroom
- Minimising the sharing of classroom resources
- Additional daily cleaning / sanitising: lunch benches, door handles, desk tops, work benches, hand railings
Cleaners ensuring cleaning stock is available as best as possible (availability is very much in the hands of the providers)

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:**Travel:**

- Please reconsider any unnecessary overseas travel in the coming months. While we understand that in some cases this travel might be unavoidable for family circumstances, overseas travel for holiday purposes should be postponed.
- Two weeks self-isolation means a significant loss of learning time for your children.

Financial Difficulties:

- Some families may be experiencing financial difficulties related to the pandemic. If this is the case, please contact the school and speak to Chris Bartlett to discuss a range of available options including a fee concession.

Tips for Keeping your Children Safe and Well:

- If your child shows symptoms of a cold or flu, keep them home. If those symptoms persist, and the symptoms are more than a 'cold', you should seek medical advice.
- If your child is well they should attend school. It is likely the pandemic will be with us for months, not weeks.
- Talk to your children about hygiene and model the recommended behaviour at home – hand washing and sneezing protocols in particular.
- Respond appropriately to issues relating to student anxiety. Some tips for talking to your child can be found [here](#). Please talk to your child's teacher or myself if assistance is required at school to manage anxiety levels.

We greatly appreciate your support and goodwill shown towards managing this current circumstance, as best as possible.

If you have any further queries, please contact your child's teacher or myself.

Kind Regards,



Chris Bartlett
Principal